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Milledge Austin

Game Recap: Football | 9/17/2016 10:30:00 PM | Marc Gignac

Murray Blocks Field Goal, GS Squeezes by ULM

The Eagles travel to Western Michigan next week.

STATESBORO, Ga. – Georgia Southern's [RJ Murray](#) blocked a 42-yard field goal attempt by ULM's Craig Ford with 1:18 to play, and the Eagles hung on for a 23-21 Sun Belt Conference football victory over the Warhawks before a school-record crowd of 25,735 Saturday evening in Paulson Stadium.

The Eagles were flagged with pass interference on 3rd-and-13 to give ULM a fresh set of downs at the GS 21-yard line with under two minutes to go. The Eagle defense dug in, and [Chris DeLaRosa](#) sacked Garrett Smith on third down to push ULM back and set up the long field goal try.

[L.A. Ramsby](#) rushed for 86 yards, and [Wesley Fields](#) churned up 84 and a touchdown to lead the Eagles (3-0, 2-0). [Ironhead Gallon](#) led the defense with 10 tackles, and [Ukeme Eligwe](#) had nine stops and an interception. [Younghoe Koom](#) made a career-high three field goals.

Smith threw for 283 yards and two touchdowns and ran for a score, and Marcus Green

caught two passes for 75 yards and a TD for the Warhawks (1-2, 0-1).

The story

With Georgia Southern leading 16-14, Fields dove into the end zone from the 2-yard line, and Koo added the PAT to extend the margin to 23-14 and open up some breathing room early in the fourth quarter. [Montay Crockett](#) gave the Eagles good field position with a 14-yard punt return, while Fields ripped off a 20-yard run and Ramsby had a 17-yard rush.

ULM came right back with a 57-yard pass from Smith to R.J. Turner, which set up a 10-yard touchdown pass from Smith to Green in the corner of the end zone. Ford added the extra point to cut the lead to 23-21 with 10:12 left in the game.

The Warhawks scored just 4:34 into the contest, when Smith hit Xavier Brown with a 32-yard touchdown pass, and it was the first touchdown against the Eagles in 155 minutes and 10 seconds, or over 10 quarters, dating back to last season. Smith then threw to Green for a 65-yard pickup over the middle, and Smith ran it in two plays later as ULM opened a 14-0 lead.

The Eagles used an up-tempo offense to drive 74 yards in 2:24 to trim the deficit in half on their next possession. Sixty-seven yards came on the ground, and [Kevin Ellison](#) ran it in from 6 yards out with seven seconds left in the first quarter.

Koo knocked in a 32-yarder with 3:58 left in the second quarter and kept moving back just like in the back yard. The senior made a 37-yarder and one from 43 yards out in the third quarter, and GS led 16-14 with 15 minutes to go. Meanwhile, the GS defense reverted to its previous form and allowed just 22 yards and a first down in the frame.

Quotable

Coach [Tyson Summers](#)

"I think the big difference was that the offense put a couple drives together and was able to hold on to the ball almost the whole third quarter. We didn't finish them off with touchdowns the way we'd like, but it helped us get our confidence back, take the lead and change the momentum of the game."

"Our defense goes out and was able to finish the game. We made the plays when we needed to and found a way to win. It's not pretty but we found a way to win despite the penalties. We need to become more disciplined or its either going to be a really long year or an overly exciting one."

On Murray's block

"I've seen him jump, that's why we had him as the jumper. We work on situational football a lot, and I thought we handled things pretty well tonight."

[L.A. Ramsby](#)

On first scoring drive

"We were trying to get the ball to the outside, and it wasn't really working. We just decided to run right at them and play Georgia Southern football. We ran pretty much the same play all the way down the field, probably like eight times, and it worked."

Ukeme Eligwe

On his interception

"As the play happened I actually got beat, I'm not going to lie, but I ran as fast as I could, looked back and stuck my hand back there and used my instincts."

On Murray

"I didn't know he could jump that high, but I guess that's why he's the jumper."

Next up

Georgia Southern travels to Western Michigan for a non-conference contest next Saturday.

Georgia Southern Football Game Notes

- Captains: #9 [Montay Crockett](#); #27 [Ironhead Gallon](#); #60 [Andy Kwon](#); #99 [Jay Ellison](#)
- Georgia Southern lost the toss and ULM took the ball. It's the first time GS has lost the coin toss this year.
- Before ULM's touchdown early in the first quarter, the last touchdown given up by the Georgia Southern defense was late in the first half of the 2015 GoDaddy Bowl, over 10 quarters ago and 1:55:10 of game clock. That streak spanned 30 drives.
- [Matt Breida](#) had 73 yards rushing in the game, giving him 3,303 for his career. He now needs 7 yards to pass Greg Hill for seventh place all-time at GS for career rushing.
- GS has played 18 Sun Belt games as it plays its third season in the conference. The Eagles are 16-2 in conference games, although the 2014 win over ULM was vacated due to NCAA violations to make GS officially 16-2 in SBC games.
- Tonight's attendance was 25,735, a new Paulson Stadium record. The previous record was 25,725, set on Dec. 16, 1989 in the National Championship Game as the Eagles beat Stephen F. Austin in Erk Russell's last game.
- The 14-point comeback ties the Eagles' biggest comeback for a victory as a member of the FBS. Georgia Southern also trailed New Mexico State 14-0 in 2014.
- R.J. Murray blocked his first career kick to help preserve the win. It was the first blocked field goal for the Eagles since Valdron Cooper blocked an attempt in the 2013 win at Florida.

- The two-point win is the smallest margin of victory for the Eagles since a 23-21 win over Chattanooga in 2013 at home.
- Georgia Southern has now won all four games against ULM played in Statesboro.
- The Eagles rushed for 345 yards in the game. They are now 21-1 in games since 2014 when rushing for 300 yards or more.
- With 73 yards rushing, senior running back [Matt Breida](#) now has 3,288 FBS rushing yards and has moved up to seventh all-time in the state of Georgia FBS/D-1A rushing leaders. He moved past Jonathan Dwyer, Garrison Hearst and Todd Gurley Saturday evening. His 15-yard run in 2013 when GS was a member of the FCS does not count.

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